

Neighbourhood Champions Handbook

Creating clean, safe and attractive
neighbourhoods - a place you can
call home...

About us



Our mission:
To be a trusted provider of quality homes, deliver excellent landlord and support services and create thriving and independent communities.



At First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) we are committed to engaging with our customers to review and shape the services that we deliver to ensure that they meet the needs of our customers.

Our Neighbourhood Champions will have the opportunity to review and challenge our performance on a quarterly basis. Their work will help influence the services that our environmental and neighbourhood teams deliver, with a view to continually improving them and making our neighbourhoods great places to live.

Our Neighbourhood Care team is responsible for all aspects of grounds maintenance and cleaning within our neighbourhoods.

Our caretakers clean all the walls, floors, windows, stairs and landings as well as carry out litter picking based on the condition of the block and service charge paid by customers.



Our promise to customers

We will...

In communal areas inside buildings:

- Remove loose litter/rubbish
- Clean skirting boards, stairs, door glass, handrails, wall lighting, windowsills and wipe walls
- Sweep hard floors clear of rubbish, mop and dry in summer, sweep and spot mop in winter
- Vacuum carpeted floor areas
- Clean, dry and polish all interior window surfaces, including glass, framework and panelling
- Sweep and mop lift floors and wipe all stainless-steel surfaces, internal and external
- Remove graffiti
- Remove abandoned items
- Remove graffiti (within 48 hours if offensive and within 10 days for any other)
- Remove abandoned items (unless perpetrator can be identified)
- Unblock bin chutes

In communal areas outside buildings:

- Collect and dispose of all litter and rubbish, including drying areas and car parks
- Sweep all bin stores clear of rubbish and debris and leave tidy
- Dust all external lights, signage and door entry systems leaving them dust and smudge free
- Clean external windows at our two, three and four storey communal flats on a programmed eight-week cycle

In communal green spaces on FCHO owned land:

- Collect litter and rubbish from grassed areas, cut grass, trim edges, sweep or blow grass cuttings off pathways and other hard surfaces
- Spot spray weeds in beds or remove
- Spot spray weeds/moss on hard surfaces
- Trim growth that is encroaching other areas such as shrubs, hedges etc
- Remove growth from tree bases
- Prune shrubs, turn over soil and remove weeds
- Undertake tree work on a rolling programme to any tree that is identified as dead, diseased, dying or a structural hazard. No other works will be completed on trees
- Undertake treatment of invasive weeds as necessary to an agreed programme





What is a Neighbourhood Champion?

Our Neighbourhood Champions act as a volunteer representative body for other customers living in their block of flats, street or whole neighbourhood. They take pride in their homes and neighbourhood, providing us with a direct link into the community for our environmental and neighbourhood teams while working together to maintain and improve their area.

The main role of our Neighbourhood Champions is to monitor the communal cleaning, grounds maintenance and other services that take place around their homes and neighbourhoods.

You can be involved as much or as little you want. You will not be responsible for taking or reporting individual issues for your neighbours – a Neighbourhood Champion's role deals solely with the communal areas where you live.

As a Neighbourhood Champion you will carry out quarterly neighbourhood inspections and report back on the condition of the communal areas, including cleaning, grounds maintenance, litter and fly-tipping issues etc. You will also assess how our service delivery measures up against our service standards and attend occasional Neighbourhood Champion meetings to swap ideas and opinions.

As a Neighbourhood Champion you may be asked to...

- Complete an estate walkabout and block inspections
- Rate the services being provided to you
- Attend Neighbourhood Champions meetings
- Liaise with FCHO's Neighbourhoods and Stronger Communities teams around improvements that can be made

Please note you can be involved with as many or as few of the above options.

All Neighbourhood Champions will *only* report the findings of their inspections of communal areas. Anti-social behaviour, money support issues and repairs in your home should be reported through the usual channels by calling us on 0161 393 7117 or emailing servicecentre@fcho.co.uk.

As a Neighbourhood Champion you are in the best position to understand if there are any issues in your community and you will have a better idea on how to improve it and make it a better place for everyone to live.



We will not leave you empty handed for your work with us. **You will receive a £10 Love 2 Shop voucher for every quarterly inspection you do.** The voucher allows you to purchase items from a number of high street stores and is a great way to treat yourself or family.

Important things to remember



- Our dedicated team aims to cut grass in communal areas in our neighbourhoods April-October on a 2-3 week schedule. The grass will not be cut in winter months.



- We don't collect grass cuttings but they will be blown away from your property and footpaths will be swept clear of any grass after every cut. Major cut-backs of shrubs and hedges take place between October and March but entrances should be clear the rest of the year.



- Please try to inspect cleaning on the day the cleaners attend, where possible.

Staying safe

- If another customer asks what you are doing walking around the area, calmly explain to them you are a Neighbourhood Champion. If they are unhappy, rather than try to explain further, remove yourself from the situation and report to the Stronger Communities team.
- We advise that you carry out inspections in daylight hours in order to be as safe as possible. If you wish to go after dark, tell someone you know that you are going to do the inspection for your safety.
- Don't offer to report someone else's personal repairs if you are made aware of them through being a Neighbourhood Champion.
- If any incidents happen while doing an inspection, report them straight away to our Stronger Communities Team.

Contact the Stronger Communities team on ci@fcho.co.uk or ring our Contact Centre on 0161 393 7117 if it is urgent.

Tips for carrying out your Neighbourhood Champion inspections

To help you carry out your Neighbourhood Champion inspections here are some photos of our blocks and gardens that do not meet our service standard along with some that do. This is so you can see how they compare and you know what to look out for. It will also help make sure we receive consistent scoring across all schemes.

Please look at the examples provided below before scoring your area.



Does meet our service standard
Example score - 5



Doesn't meet our service standard
Example score - 1



Does meet our service standard
Example score - 5



Doesn't meet our service standard
Example score - 1



Does meet our service standard
Example score - 5



Doesn't meet our service standard
Example score - 1



Does meet our service standard
Example score - 5



Doesn't meet our service standard
Example score - 1



Does meet our service standard
Example score - 5



Doesn't meet our service standard
Example score - 1



Does meet our service standard
Example score - 5



Doesn't meet our service standard
Example score - 1

How to complete the Neighbourhood Champion form

There are four sections that you must complete each quarter. These are:



Cleaning



Grounds maintenance



Communal repairs



Neighbourhood issues

If there are sections that don't apply to your scheme then you can leave them blank. We ask you to walk around the communal areas in your scheme and take the form with you to complete the inspection. Please set aside an hour to complete the inspection and the form.

Complete the form using the example pictures in this handbook as a guide for the service standard we expect.

Please give a score for each section of the inspection and provide notes about what you have seen. A score of 1 represents poor service, a score of 5 represents excellent service.

We ask you to rate your scheme bronze, silver or gold. This rating is based on your individual opinion of the scheme and is separate from the other scorings.

When completing the sections for communal repairs and neighbourhood issues, if you find that a repair is needed or an issue is observed, please make sure you note the location so we can report it on your behalf.



What we will do with Neighbourhood Champions' feedback

Feedback from our Neighbourhood Champions will be given to our relevant service areas every quarter. These are Neighbourhoods, Neighbourhood Care for grounds maintenance and cleaning and Building & Fire Safety.

Communal repairs will be reported to our teams via our Contact Centre each quarter.

Changes and improvements made to the services each quarter will be reported back to customers through our 'You said, we did' process.



Who can become a Neighbourhood Champion?

- You need to be an **FCHO customer**
- You need to be **over 16 years old**
- You can't have any **outstanding tenancy breaches**
- You need to have an **interest in improving your local area**
- You need to be **willing to work in partnership with FCHO** for the good of improving your community

Neighbourhood Champion code of conduct

Neighbourhood Champions agree...

- To be **open and honest** when dealing with FCHO colleagues and partners
- To **treat each other fairly** and respectfully at all times
- To **refer to this handbook** for guidance and follow procedure
- That their **first point of contact for issues** not covered in their inspection will be our **Contact Centre**
- To **work closely with FCHO** to maintain the quality of service within their neighbourhoods

